WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. VIII.] APRIL, 1892. [No. 4.

PRACTICAL ISSUES.

Some of our readers may suspect that we are indulging a fondness for novelty in some of our recent speculations, and that they subserve no practical ends. This is a mistake. The two points to which we have of late given special attention, are:

1. The law of progress along the scale of human life is uniform with the law that prevails in the lower realms of life. Advance is through the treasuring up for reproduction of the potencies and properties of each specific form of life in a seed after its kind. As man, however, is a creature who belongs to two planes of being, the animal and the spiritual, he virtually occupies a region of life intermediate between the two, commonly called the psychical. Moreover, there is a point in his development where, by reason of the dominance of his spiritual nature, he passes beyond the necessity of re-embodiment in earthly manhood. Or, in the language of Scripture, the process of "judgment in the flesh," issues in "life according to God in the spirit." His resurrection is no longer one "of judgment," but at the word of the Son of Man, who is the Head and Type of the heavenly order of manhood, he comes forth unto "the resurrection of life."

2. In this ascent of mankind from the animal through

the psychical to the spiritual plane of being, the Divine Author of life binds the race together by such organic ties that the higher in the scale carry with them a burden from the lower and lift them up in their advance. A law of heredity requires that in the structure of each human soul there shall enter elements from the ancestral lives that preceded it. It is no stretch in theorizing to suppose that these lives or souls—which Scripture defines by one word (*psuchai*)—should be connected in ultimate destiny with those who still represent them on the earthly plane; that they should be participants in their experiences and conflicts, and in the fruits of their failures and victories. It is on this principle that we explain the connection which Scripture uniformly makes between successive generations in the unfolding of its plan of redemption. It is because of such connection that saintly souls in their suffering and sacrifice become "baptized for the dead."

But is there anything practical in these principles? Do they bear upon human life and conduct? Is there any aid in them to piety, and any stimulus to fidelity in running the Christian race?

Our answer is that no principles of Christian doctrine are more important in their practical bearings than these. In the first place, they throw a glow of intelligence over the whole mystery of human life and experience. In this region knowledge is both light and life. To know the ways of God in human life and destiny,—what possible ground of strength and security, of stability of character and fidelity in conduct can there be superior to this? These principles not only make the whole plan of human life consistent, and illuminate the whole with the light of hope,

—they impart a new sacredness to it, in its origin and through all its unfolding. A human child comes to us freighted with precious legacies from the past and charged with untold interests for the future. A right understanding of these principles would make parents more intelligent, more tender and considerate in the treatment and training of their offspring. The parental function would be invested with a new dignity, and be lifted above the low region in which it now lies in the common mind to its proper place of importance and responsibility. Marriage would be viewed in a new light. And new and larger sympathies for humanity in its varying fortunes and struggles in the path of progress would be engendered. A proper estimate of vice and crime, of insanity and disease, and of all the untoward conditions in which multitudes of souls are struggling would be formed, and the best methods of meeting these evils, and of helping those who are bearing them not merely for their own sins but for the sins of their fathers, would be sought and more readily found. The whole subject of penology, or the proper method of administering penalties, would receive new light from this point of view, whether these penalties be imposed by parents in their households, by teachers in schools, or by governments in houses of correction and in prisons. It would be seen that there is deep meaning in the remark of Dr. O. W. Holmes, that the proper training of a child ought to begin two hundred years before it is born. Sociology needs, also, to be illumined by these principles. It would be seen that every man's position in the social fabric is precisely the one suited to him as the inheritor of the ancestral burdens and penalties he has to bear, and as

charged with the duty of struggling out from under them; but it will be also seen that the highest duty and safety of those who are in better condition is to help their poor and suffering brethren to rise above their burdens. For the race is so bound together that, if one member suffers, all must suffer with it, and the perfection of the whole can be secured only as the lowest are rescued and uplifted.

And as regards the obligation of the Christian to run with patience the race set before him, it is vastly illumined and increased by these principles. He sees himself called to be a king and priest unto God. He stands as a prince among his brethren, both living and dead, charged with their highest interests as well as with his own. He sees himself to be the helper of the weak ones who preceded him in the chain of life, and that the strong ones who have gone before him and won the crown are now his guardians and helpers. There opens out around him and before him the new relations into which this doctrine brings him to His Divine Head and Saviour, to his kindred who have gone before, and to those who still surround him with loving care and ministries, and invest him with responsibilities. He sees himself as holding new and more sacred relations to the whole brotherhood of mankind, and as charged with their highest interests. And knowing himself to be united in life with the Son of Man who is in heaven, to whom the Father hath given all power in heaven and on earth, he views himself also as a channel of His redeeming grace and power, and believes, not only as respects his personal salvation, but as the medium of salvation to others, that He who hath called him into this partnership with His Son will fulfill in him this work of faith with power, and the good pleasure of His goodness.

THE PSYCHIC REALM.

In drawing the line between the two forms of manhood defined in Scripture as the earthy and the heavenly, we have perhaps not been careful enough to include within the limits of "the earthy" all that belongs to it. It will be remembered that we have often heretofore insisted that the term "soul," as distinct from "spirit," pertains to embodiment, and that it describes a finer and more subtle vesture of the spirit than the material body. It therefore pertains to the existent or outward man rather than to the essential man who is spirit and divine. Scripture therefore represents the soul as perishable (Matt. x, 28), and warns men against the danger of losing it. But it also represents it as surviving the death of the body, as in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

There are many other proofs from Scripture that man may continue to exist in a psychic realm of being which is intermediate between the physical and the spiritual. Indeed the manner of our Lord's resurrection, which furnishes the supreme proof that the soul of man lives after death, seems to indicate that it lingers for a time in the realm of psychic being before rising into the glory of the spiritual. At His first appearance to Mary Magdalene, He tells her that He had not yet ascended to his Father. The manner of His subsequent appearance during the forty days favors the view that in a psychic body He appeared to the two disciples who at first knew him not, and afterward to the assembled company, and still later to a portion of the disciples on the shore of the lake. He appeared in a body

that still retained some of the properties of earthy manhood. It bore the marks of the wounds, it could be handled, it was capable of receiving food. Peter affirmed that certain witnesses "did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead" (Acts x. 41). And yet He was able to appear or disappear at pleasure—to vanish from sight or to enter a room with closed doors. But after His ascension He was no more seen of men under these forms of psychic manhood. Only as a glorified spiritual being was He manifested to a few eminent saints, such as Stephen and Paul and John, who in ecstasy or trance were lifted on to a mount of vision where the spiritual eye was opened to behold Him. In those few instances we read still of a human form indeed, but of dazzling brightness and clad in shining raiment. After His ascension, the normal method of His manifestation is the spiritual. The Holy Spirit reveals Him to and in the inmost spiritual being of those who are open to receive Him: so that He now appears among men in the hearts and lives of those in whom His image is being formed. "For me to live," says Paul, "is Christ." And before, He had said to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou *me?*"

It is in evidence, therefore, that there was a transition stage of being through which our Lord passed, in progress to His exalted seat at the right hand of power and from glory to glory. He would be in all things made like unto His brethren. This psychic realm of being is the one into which all human souls pass at death. It is the Hades of Scripture, a region intermediate between the earthy natural human life and the spiritual and heavenly. And, as covering all that intermediate region, it reaches, on the

one hand, down to the depths of Gehenna, where souls may suffer the second death, and upward to Paradise and to the gates of that Holy City in which is the throne of God and of the Lamb, and where they "see His face" and "inherit all things."

Certain things are eminently true of this psychic realm. In the first place, it is a realm of judgment. The judgment-scene in the twentieth chapter of Revelation depicts this ordeal. It has been commonly assumed that these verses describe a universal judgment after a general resurrection. But it is not universal, nor can it be proven that it follows resurrection, or, at all events, a *completed* resurrection. The first verses of the chapter expressly exclude from this judgment a certain class of martyrs and overcomers. But it proceeds to include the mass of *the dead.* They have not yet attained to a proper resurrection—the text does not so state—but it describes them simply as the dead who had been held captive in the realms of death and Hades. And there is nothing in the vision inconsistent with the view that it depicts a judgment now going on. Those who hold that none of the martyr saints nor of the apostles are yet risen may of course hold consistently that this whole scene belongs to the future. But we believe, as did all the early Christians, that a class of victors are already glorified with their Lord. It requires a most painful distortion of what St. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. v, and elsewhere, to maintain that he did not expect to pass directly into the presence of the Lord. And therefore we believe that in this vision St. John saw things shortly to come to pass, yea, already begun, and that the Sitter on the great white throne is continually judging *the dead* "ac-

cording to their works." Some souls, when the books of their previous lives are opened, are found "written in the book of life." They are those who "have done good," and are worthy of "the resurrection of life." Others must go down into "the lake of fire, which is the second death." Fire destroys, dissolves for new combinations, purifies. The whole realm of death and hell must be cast into it. But to assume that these souls are cast into the fire for eternal torment is to put not only a false construction upon the nature and the function of this destroying agent—it is to deny the nature of the being of the soul.

Only spirit is immortal. Soul pertains to the mortal being of man. The soul becomes indestructible only as it is penetrated and transformed by the Spirit of God. This is its resurrection of life. But a soul, which is in reality the psychic vesture of spirit, may be "destroyed," "lost," "perish." This is the second death.

This vision then, as is common in Scripture, presents at one pictorial view, the process and results of what is in reality an age-long judgment. And the destruction of the souls of the dead in the lake of fire is a process similar to that destruction of the body which is going on around us in the sphere of sense and time. Jesus frequently spoke to men of the danger of the whole body's being cast into hell, where the fire is not quenched. This fire was the expressive sign of that destruction which is visited upon the bodies of men for sin, whose wages is death. He also warned them against a possible destruction of the soul in the same gehenna of fire. The destruction of the soul necessarily completes the destruction of man as an earthly being. For soul, as we have seen, forms a part of his

present embodiment, and it can be "saved" only as men learn to give up in exchange for it those earthly pleasures and ambitions which are so dear to the carnal or natural man.

All this harmonizes with what we have previously taught concerning the continuity of personality as dependent upon character. Personality resides in soul rather than in the material body. But it also, with the exterior body, pertains to expression; it is part of the existent, rather than of the essential man. And it becomes permanent and immortal only as it yields itself to become a true expression of the divine man.

But does the destruction of the psychical man in the lake of fire make an end of man? Here we must reply as before: "It puts an end to his *existence* but not to the *essence* of his being—the spiritual nature derived from God, and because of which man is made in His image. The unworthy expression of that image is destroyed in the consuming fire—the image itself, the true spiritual being of man, cannot die, but must still pursue its path toward perfect expression. Here comes in a doctrine of reincarnation, or the resurrection to another earthly life for the ends of further progress and discipline.

But an innumerable multitude pass out of this state of psychic being into the state of spiritual manhood without this loss of the soul in the consuming fire, and this necessity of another start upon the path to true manhood—that is, without the necessity of reincarnation. What determines this issue is, of course, the soul's relation to Christ, the Saviour of men and the Judge of both living and dead. We have said that the psychic region fills up the

space between earth and heaven, but that, as differing from the realm of spirit, it is the region of expression and embodiment. On its lower side it touches earth. The soul, or psyche, gives form to the earthly man. Such souls, therefore, as pass out of this body still earthly in their affections and pursuits, are still held within the earthly sphere. It is from this class that came the manifestations of demoniacal possession and of bodily disorder which were so marked in the days of Jesus and the apostles, and which still abound, although in ways, perhaps, less obvious than then. So far as there is any reality in modern spiritualistic phenomena, they come from this lower region of the psychic realm. Here lies their danger. And it is from this region that the *reliquae* of defunct souls, after dissolution, are gathered up for further incarnation. This involves a break in their self-consciousness and in the thread of their existence. As outcast ones they were lost, and must begin anew to find their way back from the outer darkness into the light of life.

This closeness of relation between the earthy and the psychic spheres of man's being explains also why it is that they who are remanded back to earthly conditions bring the germs of former evils with them. It is that, through further conflict with these ingrained evils they may find the way to overcome them. There is both a purpose of judgment and of mercy in this law, which requires them to reap what they have sown, but which gives them also the potency and hope of a better harvest from the seed sown in tears. The law, too, of solidarity of race comes in to help on to a beneficent result. For the prin-

ciple of reincarnation involves something more than the re-embodiment of separate single souls which have been lost. The law of heredity favors the view that reincarnation may gather up the scattered elements of several such souls who were linked together by ties of kinship or affinity, grouping them together under the headship of a dominant soul in order to repair their waste and prepare them to reach a higher level in the scale of manhood. For, as we have in other connections stated, those who reach the higher levels in this battle of life must become the ministers of succor and strength to those who are struggling on the lower.

When we draw the line, therefore, between earthy and heavenly men, as being the only two classes of which Scripture speaks, we are not to forget that the lines from both these regions overlap and meet in the psychic realm which lies between and unites them both. So that it is in one sense true—as a correspondent in a late number observed—that there are earthly men who have crossed the line into the unseen world, and who remain earthly there, and are judged there as such. But we are not ready to infer from this, as does he, that no law of reincarnation for such is required, or is possible. Because, after the judgment and destruction of such persons in the realm of the dead, as depicted in Rev. xx, we would be driven to regard them as forever extinct, unless there be this provision for their recovery through the only process of resurrection that seems possible in their case—a re-embodiment under earthly conditions that shall start them again on the experimental path toward that ideal manhood in the image of which they were created, and which, to their

great suffering and loss, they failed to realize. Nothing short of some such provision as this can either fulfill the divine purpose in the creation of man, or make good the divine promises to seek and to save the lost through the agency of an elect seed of blessing and to confirm, through a generation to come, the promises which the generations who have gone failed to obtain.

Any view of redemption falls short of the truth which does not connect it with the promise of God to raise the dead, and any view of resurrection is false which makes it a mere prelude to damnation, and which does not locate the death and hell in which sinners are destroyed this side of resurrection and not beyond it.

THE SECOND DEATH.

It is in the Apocalypse alone that we meet with this expression. To the Church of Smyrna, which was the special exponent of the Church under persecution, and which stood face to face with the terrors of prison and of death, the Risen Lord sends these cheering words: "Be thou faithful until death and I will give thee a crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (ii, 11).

Accordingly we read in the twentieth chapter, of "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast neither his image," that they lived and reigned with Christ in the first resurrection, and that on them "the second death hath no power." This death is defined

in the fourteenth verse as the lake of fire into which death and hell were cast, and into which was also cast "whosoever was not found written in the book of life." Also in the next chapter (vs. 8), "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," in which all liars and murderers, and sorcerers have their part, is declared to be the second death.

With regard to the vision of the twentieth chapter, it is apparent that throughout it relates to the dealings of the Divine Judge with souls in the realms of the dead. It is *the souls* of the martyrs whom the seer saw as not hurt of the second death, over whom "it hath no power," and as rising to live and reign with Christ. While "the rest of the dead," whose judgment he afterward describes, must be presumed to be also "souls," the question of whose resurrection to life or of whose destruction in the lake of fire was to be determined by "the things written in the books." Manifestly the whole life-record of these souls was exposed. Now as these persons had died out of the body, which was their first death, what is here contemplated as their second death must be the death of the soul, or a death occurring in the psychical state. That such a death is possible was plainly declared by Jesus when He warned His disciples to fear Him who is able, beyond the death of the body, to destroy the soul also in hell (Matt. x, 28).

We hazard nothing, then, in affirming that the test to which the gospel subjects men involves just this question of the salvation of the soul, and that, by the loss or gain of the soul, it refers to this very issue which the soul must meet after death. The question will then be determined by its character and deeds whether it is fit for life. Some

souls may not be prepared to pass unscathed through this ordeal, and yet they may not be so worthless as to be condemned to destruction. Such must be "hurt of the second death," although not destroyed by it. They must be stripped of those qualities and accretions which are unworthy of the life eternal. This agrees with what we have uniformly taught, that "personal continuity of being goes with character." Personality resides in the soul, individuality in the spirit. Spirit cannot be destroyed, but the vehicle of its manifestation, the form in which it has sought personal expression, may be unworthy, and hence, to the extent of its unworthiness, must be destroyed. We have said that the destruction may be partial, because the soul may possess or acquire traits of virtue and goodness which are indestructible.

To the extent in which these traits exist the soul becomes spiritualized. The spiritual element in man's being is divine and it assimilates and preserves whatever beneath it yields to its control,* and gives over the rest to the fire. Therefore some souls are "hurt of the second death" and fall under its "power," which are not destroyed by it.

But other souls, "the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars," are found so steeped in sin that nothing but the destruction of the whole debased structure can satisfy the divine

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* It is for this reason that it is difficult in our phraseology to always preserve the distinction between soul and spirit. A soul penetrated and vitalized by spirit may be spoken of as "a spirit." Indeed there would seem to be no existence for the soul, as such, apart from spirit, any more than there is for the body. The evil spirits of Scripture were therefore souls not yet destroyed because still animated by spirit.

righteousness, or clear the ground upon which the divine nature in man can build up for itself a new and permanent abode. Such souls must, therefore, have their portion in the lake of fire—not for eternal torment,—no worse or more confusing fiction was ever invented in the Church than the theory of the necessary immortality of all souls: what is immortal in man is the spirit, which is divine, and which, however imperfect and undeveloped, can neither sin nor die. But *soul* belongs to the region of expression. It is the spirit's subtle personal form, of which the material body is the outward expression. As such, the question of its salvation or its loss, of its eternal life or its destruction, whether partial or complete, is to be determined by its fitness to be a permanent vehicle of the spirit and the eternal habitation of God.

The souls, therefore, in this vision who incur the second death in the lake of fire are *destroyed.* They are cast into it, not for endless torment, but as chaff to be burnt up with unquenchable fire. The words are of course symbolical, but the symbol represents a destruction that is complete and irreversible.

But is this the extinction of the man? Not, as we have seen, of the spirit, which is the divine groundwork of his being. It is just here, as set forth on another page, that we would find room for the doctrine of reincarnation. Souls that are only "hurt of the second death" may not need to be sent back for further judgment in the flesh. They have already begun to "live according to God in the spirit." But where the soul is destroyed there is nothing left but for the spirit to begin with another body and soul the work of building up a personal man into the likeness

of God. Hence there must be another linking of itself into the chain of human life, which is another incarnation. And, according to the law by which the human race is organized, it is required to make its new start along the line of its previous life, recasting its old materials, coming under the restraints which it imposes and the burdens which it transferred, so that it may make its progress and win its successes under conditions similar to those in which it before failed.

From this point of view it is seen to be a mistake to assign the whole of this work of judgment and destruction by the second death to a distant "last day." This last day is already here. Souls are continually passing through this ordeal. Saints who overcome rise to live and reign with Christ, while other souls, when tried by the fire which burns up all wood, hay, and stubble, are "hurt" by the dissolving process, and are only "saved so as by fire." Still other souls are lost, destroyed in this gehenna where all dross and vanity are consumed. In this "day of the Lord Jesus," as "the destruction of the flesh" inures to the salvation of the soul that through faith in Him has taken on the qualities of spirit, so this future destruction of unsaved souls will liberate the spirit for another start toward the true goal of being, which is glorified embodiment in the image of God. So that it becomes true of such a man that he is both lost and saved. In the personality in which he stood as a candidate for glory and honor and immortality, and in which he proved himself totally unfit, he is destroyed and lost to view. But the spiritual man which remained undeveloped within him, and which formed the nucleus of his being, is set free out

of this wreck of death to pursue the path by which, however tedious the way, he must at last reach the end of his being in God. And yet the new personality is not so entirely a new creation as to break all connection with the old. It gathers up from the old whatever is worth preserving or is capable of being saved, so that in this highest department of God's creating work, as in the lower, there is no needless waste and no loss. And so there is a sense in which the soul that was destroyed finds all the restoration of which it is capable in the new being which gathers up again the broken thread of life which it was not able to carry on to its completion.

THE APOCALYPSE.

ANOTHER PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION.

The closing book of the Bible is one of the most important. The Church will never attain to the true knowledge of God until she better understands it. The book, itself, in its opening and closing chapters, pronounces a special blessing upon those that read, and hear, and keep "the words of the prophecy of this book" (i. 3 ; xxii, 7).

And yet of no book has the interpretation been more diverse and confused. After a study of its numerous commentators, whether of the literal or spiritual school, preterist or futurist, following them in their search for some law of symbolism which shall explain its dark sayings, and serve as a torch to guide us through the mazes of human history, we come back from the pursuit convinced

that the true key to the interpretation of this book has not yet been found.

But there must be some principle here to guide us, and it must be one which shall link this book into the chain of previous revelations and show it to be a fitting close of the series. It must be a principle, too, which gives unity to the book, and which explains both the things which were "shortly to come to pass," and the more distant events in its divine drama of the world.

Such a principle is suggested, we believe, in contemplating the goal toward which the course of the world's history as here outlined is directed. The book teaches that, through all its changes and catastrophes, God is conducting mankind to a state of blessedness to be realized *on the earth*, when its long night of estrangement from, and ignorance of Him shall be ended; when His abode shall be with men and in them, and they shall know themselves to be His people, and when men shall be banded together in a divine commonwealth over which the Son of Man, as the vehicle of the power and grace of God, shall be enthroned, in whose light they shall be forever enlightened and uplifted into fellowship with God as the foundation of all their life and joy.

Now the crime of the world, and the source of all its calamities from the beginning, has been ignorance of God, and consequent departure from Him as the source of all life and blessing. Its long idolatry began here. Men came to believe that God was distant from them, that He was their enemy, and so they wandered away into increasing distrust and denial of Him, seeking in the creature that which only the Creator can bestow, changing His

truth into a lie, and giving to external things and to natural forces and occult powers that service and homage and trust which are due to God alone.

This Book of Revelation describes the course of human history and the calamities of the world after the coming of Jesus Christ, who brought to it a more perfect knowledge of God, and who therefore put it upon fresh trial. It shows how the old Tempter who "deceiveth the whole world" has striven to maintain supremacy over it, blinding it by devices, new and yet old, to that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ His Son which is life, and so leading it down dark declivities of rebellion and sin and death. Several times in the book is he referred to as the "deceiver of the nations" (xii, 9; xx, 3, 8, 10). It speaks of the agencies—specially of three—by which he has perpetuated over the earth this reign of ignorance of God by which, while men have lived by His life and been fed by His bounty and been upheld by His hand, they have refused to acknowledge Him as the One in whom we live and move and have our being, and from whom cometh down to us every good and perfect gift. These agencies have been: first, the governmental systems of the world, of which the Old Testament symbol was the beast; second, the wisdom of the world as embodied in its systems of learning and philosophy—the false prophet; and third, the corrupt ecclesiastical systems which lend themselves to bolster up the world-structures which crowd out God from His rightful place in the confidence and reverence and affection of mankind. Of these the rightful symbol is the harlot. Through these mighty agencies the great deceiver has drawn a veil over the nations and shut out from them

the knowledge of God which is light and life. And so they have not given Him the glory, they have worshipped and trusted in the works of their own hands. The victors over the world, of whom we have glimpses here and there in the book, are those who had triumphed over this world-spirit and had learned to glorify God in all things. They worship Him as alone worthy to receive glory and honor and power, as the Creator of all things, and by whose will they are and were created (iv, 11). All creatures in heaven, earth, and sea join in this chorus (v, 11–13). The mighty angel who comes down from heaven (x, 6) to announce the approaching end of this long reign of idolatry and of forgetfulness of God, swears "by Him who liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things that are therein, that there shall be time (delay) no longer." And the angel who flies in the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach unto all them that dwell on the earth brings this message: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made the heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." This makes it clear that the world-crime and apostasy has been the failure to recognize God as the Maker and Energizer of all things. Men were finding in the works of their hands, in the laws and forces of nature, in the organized forms of the world's power and dominion that which commanded their trust and homage, and enlisted their energies, and to which they were devoted as the sources from which to expect prosperity and happiness and success.

That this is the very essence of the world's age-long

temptation is apparent in the trial through which humanity in miniature passed in the person of Jesus in the wilderness. There the Son of Man grappled with this very temptation to deny God as the Source and Sustainer of life and of all things, and there He victoriously asserted that man can reach the goal of his being only in the way of absolute dependence upon God and perfect submission to His will. To tempt men to seek food and raiment and wealth and pleasure and influence and power at the hands of the creature rather than the Creator, this has been the world's long temptation, and in yielding to it the door has been opened to the long train of calamities and sorrows that make up so much of its history. This book unrolls the panorama of its future wars and famines and plagues.

All these evils the earlier Scriptures trace directly back to an ignorant departure from God. Israel was an epitome of the world, and Israel's history illustrates how men are blessed or cursed as they cleave to or depart from the living God in whose hand their breath is and whose are all their ways (Deut. xxviii—xxx). All the pains and diseases men suffer, the blight that falls upon their fields, their crops, their households, their business, the wars that overtake them, the famines that devour them, the desolation that sweeps over them, the hostility with which the powers of nature rise up against them in storm and flood and hail and earthquake, all take their rise in this idolatrous departure from God. If men truly knew God as the source of their life and of all life, they would soon triumph over every form of sickness and disease, as will be the case hereafter when they come to dwell in Him and He in them (xxi, 4). If they recognized Him as order-

ing all events and governing all human affairs, there would be no more wars. When men come into harmony with God, all nature will cease its discord, and no more vengeful powers will come forth out of her armory to distress or to smite. Men may smile at the thought that the course of nature adapts itself to the moral and ethical states of mankind, but just here lies the very marrow of the true doctrine of nature and of God.

We have seen that the goal toward which God is conducting the race is just this condition of perfect knowledge of Him and consequent perfect harmony, and therefore we are right in finding the radical cause of all the previous woes and discords depicted in this book in the strong delusions by which men have been kept from acknowledging God in all things. These delusions, as we have seen, have been wrought into and have given shape and tone to their systems of government, of trade, of philosophy, of science, and even of religion: for this beast has worn even the horns of a lamb. The closing chapters of the book show how the delusion ends in the building up of a great world-city, a Babylon, in which the beast reigns and with which the harlot is allied, the centre of the world's magnificence and power and commerce. The reference is not so much to any single city as to a great world-system, the presence of which we can discern all around us, and of which Christendom seems to be the special seat. In this city the whole course of trade, of politics, of education, of philosophical and scientific speculation, and much of what passes for Christianity, tends to perpetuate and heighten this great delusion—that man lives by bread alone rather than by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God, that his life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, that only he can be said to live who liveth in pleasure, or in honor or in riches, that God is a far-off or indifferent spectator of men's conduct and affairs, that the stern powers of nature rule over man of themselves and apart from Him, and that as all things have continued from the beginning of the creation so they must go on until the end. Or, still worse, large masses of the denizens of this world-city say, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," denying even that there is a God or a future life, "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. iv, 18, 19).

That this ignorance of the fatherhood of God and of His claim on, as well as His care over, all His children is fatal to any true idea of brotherhood among men goes without saying. Selfish competition, disregard of the rights and of the needs of our brother men must always abound where there is no true sense of our common relationship to God.

By so much as we can discern these characteristics of Babylon, the city of man's building, in the world around us to-day, by so much we may know that the time of its overthrow is near, and of the revelation of the city of God's building in which men shall know God, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of His glory as the waters cover the sea.

Behind, then, the imagery of this book it is easy to dis-

cern that the law for the individual Christian is the law for the race as a whole. It must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God. The book depicts the ways by which mankind has been long deceived as to the true ground of being and the true source and end of life. It has been living by the senses, setting its affections on the creature, blinding itself to the spiritual and the eternal in its pursuit of things temporal, and so getting away from God into that region where life becomes the prey of calamity and disease and poverty and death, where nations are scourged by wars and famines and pestilence, and where the powers of nature, ordained to be the ministers of God's goodness and bounty to men, become the agents of His displeasure. This book shows how this grand deceit is broken up, until mankind is humbled under the mighty hand of God and learns to find in Him its portion. Its descriptions, therefore, fit the whole of past as well as future history, in both of which this process of divine dealing with humanity is seen. The fall of the Roman empire, the rise and decay of Mohammedanism, the wars of the Reformation, the French Revolution, and Napoleon, are all reflected in this mirror. And the triumphs of Christ, the advance of that perfect knowledge of the Father which He brought to the world, and of that more abounding life of which He became the Source, are also here portrayed up to the final consummation when the river of the water of life, flowing from His throne, shall bring healing and joy to all nations.

We discover, also, that the world's great need is to know God, and that the Church's one remedy is the right knowledge of God. When we come to know Him, not simply with the intellect but by a true heart-perception, as the one

Life that lives in all life, as the one Force behind all forces, as entering so closely into the sphere of our lives that even the hairs of our head are numbered, that all the atomic depths and heights of our being are pervaded by His energy, and all our changes and events are directed by His wisdom, then we shall begin to learn something of what it means to trust Him, and to so dwell in His secret place that no evil shall befall us nor any plague come nigh us; and all natural agents as well as heavenly powers, shall become angels charged by Him to keep us in all our ways; yea, they shall become ministers to do our pleasure, for we shall then have no other pleasure than to execute His will.

That this true knowledge of God is already breaking through the world's long night of ignorance and sin and trouble, there are many indications. That there must be a tempest where there are still such thick clouds, that the thunder of His power must be manifest before the clouds shall break and the calm, clear day appear, is to be expected. This book shows how this has been necessary in the past, and how it is supremely necessary at the close. But there is nothing in its darkest pictures of the future to prevent us from lifting up our heads as redemption draweth nigh, or from uttering, with truest fervor and hope, for ourselves and for all mankind, the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." The images of wrath and terror and torment, with which this book abounds, show that the long intrenched evil of the world can be dealt with only by a stern hand. But then it is *our* God who is the consuming fire, and what He casts into it are the worthless elements in individuals or in nations which obstruct in them that knowledge of Himself which is indispensable to their eternal welfare and happiness and peace.

THE IDEA that the recovery of the dead is in some way connected with the fidelity of the living is not only as old as the religion of the Bible—it is a fundamental conception in that religion. It was implied in the first promise made to Adam, who had just been sentenced to death, that a future conquering seed should undo the work of death. It was implied in the promise to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. If the deceased members of these families are to be counted out as placed beyond the reach of this blessing, then to most of the human race the promise becomes a nullity. The whole range of Old Testament promise and prophecy proceeds upon this principle, that the blessing of which one generation fails and proves unworthy is reached by some succeeding generation, who achieve it, not only for themselves, but for the generations behind them. Upon no other principle could such promises as were given, for example, through Isaiah (ch. xlix) and Jeremiah (xxxi) and Ezekiel (xxxvi–vii), bring the least hope and comfort to the men to whom they were addressed. And in no other way could the resurrection of Jesus Christ become the confirmation of the promises made unto the fathers (Acts xxvi, 6–8 ; Rom. xv, 8–12).

HAVE WE not ample evidence that the grandest characters the world has ever known have been those who have believed in the unity of humanity ? The noble, expansive men and women are not the ones who would set aside a chosen few as the elect of God, but rather are they those who have no separate purpose or place from the whole human family ; whose aim and action in life are to come

into touch with the divine spark in each; who recognize the existence of this divine spark in every one, and through such recognition are enabled to hope all things, to believe all things.—*Wayside Lights.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

SPIRIT-POSSESSION IN CHINA.—We lately listened to a paper on this subject, of which a synopsis is given in *The Presbyterian* of February 24th, as follows:

At the meeting of the Presbyterian Ministers' Association last Monday, Rev. John Nevius, of China, read a paper of much interest and ability upon "The Phenomena of Spirit-possession as observed by Missionaries in China." Dr. Nevius has given considerable attention to this subject for the past twelve years, and has been in communication in regard to it with missionaries of different denominations in various sections of China. He mentioned a number of instances in which he regarded the evidence conclusive as to demoniacal possessions in heathendom. He said the Chinese distinguish between the subjects of epilepsy and mania, and those possessed of evil spirits. He traced some twenty-two resemblances between the demoniacal possessions recorded in the Bible, and those existing in his judgment, in China. Among them were the attacking of both sexes and all ages, doing so periodically, tormenting the subjects, inflicting upon them bodily injury, differences of manifestations, shameless conduct, or great indelicacy exhibited, remarkable knowledge of God and Jesus Christ and His power to cast out the demons manifest, a double consciousness or the operation of opposing influences, the same body the tenant of several evil spirits, a seeking to retain possession of the victim, the assertion of a new personality, attempts at expulsion in Christ's name successful, exorcism by other agencies, a return of the demons after being once expelled, the possessions recognizable by the people, and the manifestations subservient to Satan's kingdom and opposed to Christ's. The topic was more briefly discussed by Rev. Stephen A. Hunter, M. D., of China, who differed from the conclusions reached by Dr. Nevius, and treated the matter from a medical point of view. He said that the missionaries were greatly divided in opinion on the subject.

Baptism for the Dead.—Two more writers in *The Churchman* have been vainly striving to throw light upon St. Paul's question in 1 Cor. xv, 29, "Why then are they baptized for the dead?" Like most interpreters they assume that the primary reference is to the ritual act of baptism; whereas the context makes it plain that the baptism referred to is a fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. This was the baptism wherewith many believers, notably Paul himself, were then baptized, and to which he alludes when he says, "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" This was the baptism of which Jesus had forewarned His disciples (Mark x, 38).

The obscurity in which all these interpreters grope would at once disappear if they would take the words at their face value, and believe that they mean what they say. They speak of a baptism *in behalf of* (ὑπέρ) the dead. They plainly imply that Christians who take part in Christ's sufferings are helpers in His work of recovering the dead. In some way unknown to us, their being baptized with His baptism inures to the benefit of the dead. This sounds strange in the ears of modern Christianity, which seems blind to the fact that the whole scheme of redemption relates to the recovery of the human race from death, the wages of sin, through a salvation from the sin which worketh death, and that the instrument of this salvation is a chosen seed of which Christ is the Head: and just as His victory opened prison-doors and led captivity captive, so is the Head continually repeating and multiplying His victory in His members, who also triumph not only for themselves, but for the dead.

The whole scheme of the Christian faith is ere long to receive a new illumination from the recognition of this one of its primary principles, that the great organism of humanity is one, and that it embraces both the dead and the living, and that the redemption of the dead must be accomplished through the fidelity of the living.

Prayer for the Dead.—*The Church Times*, of London, in a recent number says:

"That our Lord prayed for the dead may be inferred from the common practice of the Jewish Church, of which He lived and

died a practicing member during His manifestation, and not one word of His teaching so much as called it into question. We may reasonably believe that neither He nor His chosen interpreters expressly forbade such an exercise of prayer, that the door of hope might be open to all, nor definitely enforced it, that none might presume."

It also quotes many of the Fathers, especially Cyril, of Jerusalem and Chrysostom.

SOLIDARITY.—A correspondent sends us the following, clipped from the *New York Evangelist's* exposition of the Sunday-school lesson on Ezek. xxxvi, 32:

It is sometimes said that *solidarity* is a truth of the nineteenth century; that the ancients knew nothing of it. Yet all through our Bible we find it in such form as the minds of an earlier time were able to accept—a prophecy of a truth, which even yet is only vaguely apprehended by the best of us—that we do not live for ourselves alone, that God's judgments, mercies, teachings are not for a few, not narrowed down to those who deem themselves His own elect, but are for the sake of all mankind, we know not that we may not say for the sake of the universe. And that particular enjoyment of it which is indeed lavished upon those who are prepared by His Spirit to receive it, may well bow them with shame in view of their small desert.

SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE.—Henry Wood in the March *Arena* quotes Professor J. P. Cooke as saying in his *Religion and Chemistry*,

"There may be a world of spiritual existences around us—inhabiting this same globe, enjoying the same nature—of which we have no perception; in fact, the wonders of the New Jerusalem may be in our midst, and the songs of the angelic host filling the air with their celestial harmony, although unheard and unseen by us."

This accords with what we have taught concerning Christs's second coming—that it is a *manifestation* rather than a downburst.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a Presbyterian minister in the West:

Permit me to add my approval to your recent conclusion to go on with the publication of your most excellent magazine. I did not feel it right to urge this upon you, because of my inability to give you aid. But I think the Presbyterian Church has no greater need of light than of the kind which shines from the pages of your magazine.

If you will allow any suggestions from an humble pen, I would say, go on and expend your strength mainly on the plain Bible issue that the *Resurrection of mankind is in its whole scope redemptive.* I would build less on science and human philosophy, because they are only very weak and fallible aids to the truth in point, and spend more effort to prove the *fact* of the universally redemptive character of resurrection, rather than dwell on the minor question of the *how* the change will be brought about.

The truth of the unity or solidarity of the race is a pillar of support to the question at issue. The universal headship of Christ is an equal pillar.

Your position of independence could not be more praiseworthily explained and taken. The truth must suffer under any other position.

You have my hearty support and sympathy. It seems to me the eyes of the Church are becoming more and more open to these truths. But a change so great cannot be brought about quickly. So we must be careful not to press the matter too fast. The people are not ready for it. The great Reformation of the 15th century had been *begotten* over one hundred years before it was *born.* The larger hope type of truth is as yet only begotten.

May the Lord bless you with *light* and *courage* to defend truth as it appears from the sacred page.

From a clergyman in Boston:

I rejoice that you have been enabled to go on with your work and earnestly hope that the way may be opened for you to continue to do so for years to come.

I am in profound sympathy with every word you have written in the March number under the heading "A Radical Mistake."

As to the subject of reincarnation I do not know as yet what to say. It does seem to be a logical inference from the redemptive character of resurrection. The arguments you have thus far presented cannot easily be set aside. There must be some great,

absolute, universal truth, to be revealed, here or there, regarding the Divine method of dealing with the human race, by which the pall of sadness which sometimes settles down upon our minds will be lifted. I am sure that God's justice will never contradict His infinite love.

From a lady in Chicago:

It is with feelings of joy and thanksgiving that I can renew for the coming year my subscription for the three copies of WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

Words cannot convey to you my feelings on opening the November number of Magazine.

On reading the first article with its possibilities, I mentally affirmed I would sooner give up all other reading matter coming to this house than this work. It has helped me as none other. In fact I know of nothing in this line among the multiplicity of books written. It stands alone and must be the Spirit's teaching.

Following my apprehensions, came the assurance so strong that the way would be made clear by the Master for a continuance of the words of truth, that I opened the December number without a doubt as to what I would find chronicled therein.

Surely, you must feel it is the Lord's doing, and that "This is the way, walk ye in it."

As illustrative of the class of persons this magazine is designed to help, we give the following from a lady in Bowling Green, Ky.:

I have a circular of your books and magazines. I have never heard of them or seen a copy of them. I am deeply interested in the subjects upon which you write. Am perplexed with the statement in the Bible, "God is Love," while there is everlasting punishment and pain going on under His government, and with His consent and foreknowledge. These things do often distress my inmost soul, and, though I say little about my feelings, as I am, I trust, a believer and truster in God, still I cannot help thinking, and, when I think, these thoughts assert themselves beyond my control. I am very poor now, and have no money to send for the books or magazine, but won't you send me a specimen copy of the magazine so I can see something of your teachings. I may be able to get some subscribers to it if I knew and approved the teaching. I will send you another name to whom you may send a specimen copy as I know her to be also interested in the subject.

A new subscriber writes from Chicago:

I read your magazine with much interest, and I trust profit. While your teachings concerning the solidarity of the race, and reincarnation are new to me, I by no means would brand them as heathenish, or heretical; your thoughts on these themes certainly are practical, and when believed and accepted as *the truth*, must have the effect of stirring one up to the importance of forming a Christ-like character in this life. And should that not be our greatest effort now? Dear brother, I can truly say that that is my greatest desire and aim in this life, but how hard it is to overcome, and completely crucify the natural or *soulual* man; however, I am thankful that I can clearly see the great and all important necessity of literally following our blessed Saviour and Master; and I am willing and ready to sacrifice all present interests to that glorious end.

A lady, now in Europe, who has been one of the best friends and supporters of the magazine, writes:

Your letter announcing your determination to continue the WORDS OF RECONCILIATION has been received with great pleasure and satisfaction. Many of your readers are in sympathy with you, and seeking to follow your example in the new field of thought, though still "afar off," but we know the Holy Spirit is very jealous for the Word of God, and we will trust that He will open to us that truth through you. Certainly the Church of these days has need of a deeper revelation of God's mind and character, and that can only come through the Spirit's gift of grace to receive. "It is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

I am most thankful you have met with the encouragement of friends, and doubt not that your hands will be *stayed up* by fervent prayers from many of your readers whom you have been the means of enlightening and strengthening in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From a prominent clergymen in Canada:

I always read WORDS OF RECONCILIATION with interest, whether I agree with the views presented or not. What I like is the *spirit* in which you write—tolerant as well as earnest, and the frank recognition of difficulties without the assumption that you have the solution of them all ready. I emphatically indorse the statement in the January number that no greater boon could be conferred upon the Church than a new eschatology which would be both rational and scriptural.